CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/1103
19 August 1991

ENGLISH
Original: ENGLISH/FRENCH

LETTER DATED 19 AUGUST 1991 FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF THE "COMMUNIQUE ISSUED FOLLOWING THE MEETING OF THE FIVE ON ARMS TRANSFERS AND NON-PROLIFERATION (PARIS, 8 AND 9 JULY 1991)"

I have the honour to send you herewith the official text of the communique issued following the meeting held in Paris on 8 and 9 July 1991 between representatives of the five States permanent members of the United Nations Security Council concerning arms transfers and non-proliferation.

I would be grateful if you would circulate this text as an official document of the Conference, and arrange for its translation into the other languages of the Conference.

(Signed) Gérard ERRERA

GE.91-62283/1228H

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED FOLLOWING THE MEETING OF THE FIVE ON ARMS TRANSFERS AND NON-PROLIFERATION

(Paris, 8 and 9 July 1991)

1. Representatives of the United States of America, the People's Republic of China, France, the United Kingdom, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, met in Paris on 8 and 9 July to review issues related to conventional arms transfers and to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

They noted with concern the dangers associated with the excessive build up of military capabilities, and confirmed they would not transfer conventional weapons in circumstances which would undermine stability. They also noted the threats to peace and stability posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons, chemical and biological weapons, and missiles, and undertook to seek effective measures of non-proliferation and arms control in a fair, reasonable, comprehensive and balanced manner on a global as well as on a regional basis.

2. They had a thorough and positive exchange of views on the basis of the arms control initiatives presented in particular by President Bush, President Mitterrand, Prime Minister Major and on other initiatives which address these problems globally and as a matter of urgency in the Middle East. They also agreed to support continued work in the United Nations on an arms transfers register to be established under the aegis of the United Nations Secretary-General, on a non-discriminatory basis, as a step towards increased transparency on arms transfers and in general in military matters.

They stressed that the ultimate response to the threat of proliferation is verifiable arms control and disarmament agreements amongst the parties concerned. They expressed strong support for full implementation of existing arms control regimes. For their part, they will contribute to this objective by developing and maintaining stringent national and, as far as possible, harmonized controls to ensure that weapons of mass-destruction related equipments and materials are transferred for permitted purposes only and are not diverted.

They also strongly supported the objective of establishing a weapons of mass destruction-free zone in the Middle East. They expressed their view that critical steps towards this goal include full implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 687 and adoption by countries in the region of a comprehensive programme of arms control for the region, including:

- a freeze and ultimate elimination of ground-to-ground missiles in the region;

- submission by all nations in the region of all of their nuclear activities to IAEA safeguards;

- a ban on the importation and production of nuclear weapons usable materials;

- agreement by all States in the region to undertake to becoming parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention as soon as it is concluded in 1992.

3. They acknowledged that Article 51 of the United Nations Charter guarantees every State the right of self-defence. That right implies that States have also the right to acquire means with which to defend themselves. In this respect, the transfer of conventional weapons, conducted in a responsible manner, should contribute to the ability of States to meet their legitimate defence, security and national sovereignty requirements and to participate effectively in collective measures requested by the United Nations for the purpose of maintaining or restoring international peace and security.

They recognized that indiscriminate transfers of military weapons and technology contribute to regional instability. They are fully conscious of the special responsibilities that are incumbent upon them to ensure that such risks be avoided, and of the special role they have to play in promoting greater responsibility, confidence and transparency in this field. They also recognize that a long-term solution to this problem should be found in close consultation with recipient countries.

4. They expressed the intention that:

- when considering under their national control procedures conventional weapons transfers, they will observe rules of restraint. They will develop agreed guidelines on this basis;

- taking into account the special situation of the Middle East as a primary area of tension, they will develop modalities of consultation and of information exchanges concerning arms transfers to this region as a matter of priority;

- a group of experts will meet in September with a view to reaching agreement on this approach;

- another plenary meeting will be held in October in London;

- further meetings will be held periodically to review these issues.

5. They expressed the conviction that this process of continuing cooperation will contribute to a worldwide climate of vigilance in this field which other countries will share.